# Historical development of Clinical Psychology in India

Introduction to Applied Psychology (K.R. Mangalam University)

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The academic field of psychology had its formal beginning at Calcutta University in 1915 where Professor Girindrashekar Bose took interest in clinical psychology and initiated psychoanalytic practice. He made efforts to provide care to the people suffering from mental health problems (Prabhu & Shankar, 2004). The contributions of Bose and his colleagues in the development of clinical psychology during the initial half of the last century have been highly appreciated (Prabhu, 1974). The Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, started a one-year diploma course in clinical psychology in 1951 (Prasadarao & Sudhir, 2001). However, it was the establishment of the All India Institute of Mental Health in 1954 that became instrumental in the proper formal initiation and development of clinical psychology as a professional discipline in India.

Formal professional education in clinical psychology can also be traced to 1955, soon after the inception of the All India Institute of Mental Health—now known as National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)—established by the Government of India in Bangalore. The institute began offering a regular postgraduate diploma course in medical psychology from 1955, that was restructured, revised, and updated into a two-year clinical–professional education program, currently named Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Clinical Psychology (Prasadarao & Sudhir, 2001). The Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), Ranchi, followed with a Diploma in Medical and Social Psychology (currently known as M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology) in the year 1962 with a focus on wide-ranging aspects in the biopsychosocial treatment approach for mentally ill patients (Prabhu, 1974). Similarly, B.M Institute, Ahmedabad, started a professional education program in Clinical Psychology in 1972 (Prasadarao & Sudhir, 2001).

The above-mentioned details underline the consistent and robust contributions of two premier national institutions to the cause of clinical psychology in India— NIMHANS, Bengaluru, and CIP, Ranchi—with regard to creation, development, and consistency in maintaining exemplary standards of professional–ethical clinical conduct, clinical evidence base, and clinical personnel education and preparation in the field. These institutions played a significant role in developing psycho-diagnostic and intervention methods that led to better contextualized clinical practice. Also, the NIMHANS and CIP together trained about 20–24 clinical psychologists per annum through the second half of the twentieth century. Table 19.1 highlights the major milestones in the field of clinical psychology in India.

Another milestone in the field is the formation of the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP) in 1968 and its official publishing and communication arm, the Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology, in 1974 (Verma, 1998). The premier body of Clinical Psychologists in India is the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP). It was created in 1968 and has since been important in furthering the major growth and development related to professional activities of clinical psychology. Its aims and objectives are aligned with the larger purpose of earning due recognition for the field of clinical psychology as a major professional field in the area of mental health (Prabhu, 1974). The IACP has set up a task force on practice guidelines and professional ethics in the discipline. IACP conducts Annual Conference of Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (NACIACP) in order to facilitate and encourage interaction and exchange among pioneers in the field of mental health.

Perhaps, the most significant and recent major milestone in the development and practice of clinical psychology in India was the creation of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). The RCI was created as a registered society in 1986. Subsequently, the RCI Act was passed by the Parliament in 1992, and the very following year, it was made a statutory body. In 2000, the RCI Act was revised to give it a wider regulatory-monitory role. The RCI was, thus, empowered with the required statutory authority

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for designing, standardizing, and monitoring educational programs in clinical psychology, providing validatory approval to institutions and upkeep of a central rehabilitation register of all qualified clinical psychologists.

Year Major events in the development of clinical psychology

1921 Formation of Indian Psychoanalytic Society

1925 Indian Psychological Association formed

1930 Indian Psychoanalytical Institute established for the practice of psychoanalysis

1947 Publication of Samiksha begins (official publication of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society)

1951 Formal Professional Education in Clinical Psychology started at Banaras Hindu University

1956 Diploma Programme in Medical and Social Psychology commenced at All India Institute of Mental Health

1962 Diploma in Medical and Social Psychology started at the Hospital for Mental Diseases

1968 Formation of Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists

1972 Diploma in Medical and Social Psychology started at BM Institute of Mental Health

1974 Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology

1987 Mental Health Act replaced the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912

1992 Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act

1995 The Persons with Disabilities Act

1999 The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act

2011 Positive Psychology unit established at NIMHANS

2014 Service for Healthy Use of Technology Clinic (SHUT Clinic), NIMHANS

2016 The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act

2017 The Mental Healthcare Act

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